

Washington- June 19, 2008

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this rule because of the flood relief provisions included in the supplemental funding bill. I'm pleased that this amendment includes \$2.65 billion for flood relief in my State and others. And I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this rule because of this important funding.

Iowa is currently experiencing record flooding which is having a widespread and unprecedented impact on people, property and agriculture in the State. Governor Culver has issued an emergency proclamation for 83 of Iowa's 99 counties, all experiencing significant damage due to the combination of severe rainfall, tornadoes, high winds and flooding. Fifty-five Iowa counties have been declared Presidential disaster areas. Seventeen citizens have lost their lives, and many more have been injured. Over 38,000 Iowans have been displaced from their homes already, and thousands more have been disrupted because of the closure, through evacuation, of Iowa hospitals, nursing homes, businesses and schools. More than 18 shelters have been in operation in more than a dozen counties. And it is estimated that 20 percent of the State's cropland has been destroyed. And the flooding still continues.

This flooding has impacted everyone in Iowa. And the scope of damages to Iowans' homes, lives and livelihoods is almost beyond description. Some are calling this disaster ``the Katrina of the Midwest." If you were to travel around Iowa, you would understand what they are talking about.

This unprecedented destruction needs and deserves a swift and special response from Congress. That's why this \$2.65 billion flood relief package is so important. Iowans and people across the Midwest impacted by this flooding need immediate help to restart their businesses, salvage their farms and rebuild their lives after this devastating flood.

When things get tough in Iowa, Iowans come together to help one another. I would look to thank the Appropriations Committee and the House leadership for coming together and working with me and my colleagues from Iowa to provide this urgently needed flood relief funding. This disaster relief funding is a crucial first step on the road to Iowa's full recovery. And I urge all of my colleagues to support it by voting for this rule.

